



The New River Improvement Project



A Project of the California Mexico Border Relations Council and the City of Calexico

New River Improvement Project

Technical Advisory Committee Meeting

California Department of Toxics and Substance Control

El Centro Field Office

627 Wake Ave.

El Centro, 92243

Thursday, January 13, 2011

2:00 p.m.

Meeting Notes

- 1) **Welcome and Introductions.** Acting New River Improvement Project Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Chair Jose Angel (Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board) called the meeting to order at 2:20 p.m. and welcomed all attendees. In attendance were the following committee members /designees/alternates: Miguel Figueroa (Calexico New River Committee), Daniel Garza (California Environmental Protection Agency alternate), Roger Vintze (California Department of Toxics and Substance Control), Frank Gonzalez (CalTrans), Leon Lesicka (Citizens Congressional Task Force on the New River), Carlos Maturino (City of Calexico), Luis Olmedo (Comité Cívico del Valle (left early)), Andy Horne (County of Imperial designee), Linsey Dale (Imperial County Farm Bureau), Steve Charlton (Imperial Irrigation District designee), Antonio Ortega (Office of Assembly Member V. Manuel Perez designee) and Jonathan Ballard (U.S. General Services Administration). Committee members unable to attend included Ema Rosa Silva (Calexico Community Representative/Vecinos de Calexico), Anna Milloy (California Department of Fish and Game, Bermuda Dunes Office), Dr. Marilyn Underwood (California Department of Public Health, Environmental Health Branch (attempted to meet but did not have correct info to log in), Ricardo Martinez (California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA), Luis Estrada (City of Calexico), Lisa Santana (International Boundary and Water Commission), and Eduardo Demesa (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers). Also in attendance were Carlos Angulo (CalEPA), Trevor Taniguchi (CalEPA), John McCaull (consultant, by phone), Juanita Salas (Office of Congressman Bob Filner, by phone), Kathleen Yokota-Wahl (California Department of Toxics and Substance Control), and facilitators Carl Nettleton and Gabriela Coverdale (Nettleton Strategies).
- 2) **Acceptance of Meeting Notes of December 15, 2010, Meeting.** Upon motion, Gonzalez, Second Ballard, the notes from the December 15, 2010, meeting were unanimously accepted.
- 3) **TAC Chair Update.** Acting Chair Jose Angel reported that he had been asked by Ricardo to chair the meeting and urged the TAC to continue moving forward. He also mentioned that

Ricardo is busy with the new governor transition team. Committee members were reminded to submit the signature page from the Charter to Carl Nettleton. Several of the members of the TAC signed the Charter during the meeting.

4) Mapping Update (Gabriela Coverdale). Gabriela Coverdale presented the updates of the mapping of the New River. Updates included the following:

- a) Identifying sections of the river to make discussion more manageable. The TAC agreed that the following sections would be appropriate:
 - i) North drainshed
 - ii) Central drainshed
 - iii) South drainshed north of All American Canal
 - iv) South drainshed south of All American Canal (City of Calexico section)
 - v) Seeley
 - vi) Brawley
 - vii) Salton Sea direct drainshed
- b) Sections proposed for wetlands
- c) Updating Drop 2 and Calexico wastewater treatment plant locations

5) Progress Reports from Workgroups. The workgroup reports included the following:

- a) **Impairments/Remediation.** Jose Angel led several discussions after reporting the work plan tasks are on track.
 - i) There are significant differences between FEMA and Army Corps 50 and 100 year flood estimates (nearly ten-fold differences – 1,600 cfs vs. 12,000 cfs). It was reported that IID has a tight tab on these statistics and there information should be reviewed. Current and projected scenarios are needed to determine scenarios for encasement. A smaller culvert means greater risk of exceeding capacity and a larger culvert means less chance. Risk analysis was suggested that would predict what would happen at given scenarios. NOTE: This discussion should have been conducted under the Visioning Work Group since encasement is one of the land use/visioning options, not a remediation option.
 - ii) The flood plain north of the wastewater treatment plant would be the area of concern if there were to be unacceptable levels of contaminants in the sediment. Upon motion, Ballard, second, Dale, the TAC recommended an expenditure be made of approximately \$6,800 to utilize a rig to drill in the floodplain. This will not be a complete characterization, but will help to determine if there would be contamination issues should a project be envisioned in the area. Results could be out by February.
 - iii) Logan Raub is providing the regulations documenting how he determined the impairments previously reported.
 - iv) Jose recommended that a separate work group be developed to look at remediation options, but consensus, the TAC agreed that Steve Charlton and Leon Lesicka will co-chair that group. The Remediation Work Group's mission will be to provide a

high-level look at options for remediating identified impairments in both New River water and sediment. TAC members who volunteered to be on the new Work Group included Andy Horne, Linsey Dale, Miguel Figueroa, Jose Angel, Roger Vintze and someone from Imperial County Department of Health (Andy to provide a name). Al Kalin from the Farm Bureau was suggested as a resource for the work group.

- b) **New River Visioning.** Miguel Figueroa reported that there will be some additional visioning options with water quality improvement elements available in the City of Calexico area and he has been working with the Work Group on this. The plan is to write a comprehensive document to capture in writing the range of the options. The group is on schedule with the work plan tasks.
 - c) **Funding/Background.** Dan Garza reported that the first three of the Work Group's tasks have been completed. The final tasks require better definition of what the options for remediation and visioning might be and will be completed when that is available.
- 6) **Preparation for February Public Meeting.** A focused discussion on the proposed February public meeting resulted in the following:
- a) Key message points were identified and agreed upon:
 - i) The public meetings are the first chance the public has to learn about the work that is underway, to understand the process to complete the strategic plan, and to provide comments about the planning process and the future of the New River.
 - ii) This is an inter-agency group, working together in a unique way, for the first time to move the New River forward
 - iii) This is the first time the New River in California has received integrated/systematic funding in a comprehensive manner.
 - iv) This is the first time the state has given this project funding
 - v) This is the first time these agencies have worked together
 - vi) Describe the TAC: AB 1079 suggested a technical advisory committee be developed consisting of impacted cities and counties, relevant local, regional and state agencies and departments, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders. This committee was formed and now includes four work groups tasked with accomplishing the background work necessary to complete the strategic plan.
 - vii) The members of the Technical Advisory Committee are working together to create a strategic plan that will come up with a way to:
 - (1) Improve water quality
 - (2) Protect public health
 - (3) Maintain the role of the river as a part of the agricultural drain system
 - (4) Provide opportunities for economic development.
 - (a) This includes the possibility of creating additional job opportunities,
 - (b) Increasing tourism, and

- (c) Facilitating future expansion of the Port of Entry project and the economic development that would come with that.
 - (5) Improve recreational opportunities that might include multi-use trails for walking, horseback riding, hiking, mountain biking,, nature walks etc.; camping, and bird watching/photography.
 - (6) Identify the current status of the New River impairments so the public will understand that status.
 - (7) Identify the beneficial uses of the river that could be achieved.
- b) The dates, times and locations of the public meeting will be as follows:
 - i) Wednesday, February 23, 6-8 p.m., Brawley (Antonio Ortega to be responsible for arranging meeting site (One-Stop Center and All American Club were options discussed)
 - ii) Thursday, February 24, 1-3 p.m., El Centro/Imperial (Steve Charlton to be responsible, working with Linsey Dale, for arranging meeting site (IID Board Room and Farm Bureau were options discussed)
 - iii) Thursday, February 24, 6-8 p.m., Calexico (Miguel Figueroa to be responsible for arranging meeting site, City Cultural Arts Center and Community Center were options discussed)
- c) The format of the presentation was discussed. The TAC agreed it should be two-hour event. Thirty minutes into the event there will be a short presentation with the following elements:
 - i) AB1079 background, including sponsors and funding
 - ii) About the Strategic Plan
 - iii) About the TAC
 - iv) What the tasks are and the process to complete them
 - v) What deliverables will be provided
 - vi) Overview of the GIS map that is putting the plan together
- d) Additionally, the following materials will be prepared, utilizing the draft materials and formats created previously:
 - i) Materials to announce the meeting:
 - (1) Media Advisory
 - (2) Press Release
 - (3) Flyer
 - (4) Information in a format for organizational web pages and newsletters
 - ii) Materials for the meeting:
 - (1) A board for each work group
 - (2) Several overview boards
 - (3) Fact sheet
 - (4) Public comment card with postage paid envelope (or on the card)
 - iii) The TAC agreed the formats shown on screen were acceptable and the common message agreed upon will be reflected in the materials.
 - iv) Strategy for announcing the meeting
 - (1) Announcement materials will be prepared by Nettleton Strategies

- (2) Trevor Taniguchi will distribute materials
 - (3) Nettleton Strategies will finalize email and mailing lists
 - (4) Antonio Ortega will do media followup
 - (5) Jose Angel and/or Ricardo Martinez will act as the group's spokesperson
- e) The work plan will be updated to reflect decisions made. Key dates include:
 - i) January 17 – announcement materials will be sent to TAC members for review
 - ii) January 17 – work group board formats will be sent to work group chairs so they can determine information they would like to present
 - iii) January 21 – announcement materials will have been modified and approved by TAC
 - iv) January 25 - work group boards will be returned to Nettleton Strategies.
 - v) January 24 – announcement materials will be provided to Jose for translation
 - vi) January 26 – translated materials will be returned to Nettleton Strategies
- f) The New River Improvement Project web site was discussed. The CalEPA web development team might not be able to produce the web site in time for the announcements. The group viewed possible domain names online and chose www.newriverproject.org. The domain and a template web-site builder will be purchased immediately following the meeting to ensure a web site can be available. The web site would initially contain the following elements:
 - i) Background
 - ii) Technical Advisory Committee Charter
 - iii) Public Meetings
 - iv) Technical Advisory Committee Meetings
 - (1) Agendas
 - (2) Notes
 - v) Historical Reports, References, and Links
 - (1) Legislation and Regulations
 - (2) Impairments
 - (3) Projects
 - (4) Organizational Links
- g) As part of the planning process for the public meetings, the regularly scheduled February 24 TAC meeting will not be held because it falls on the day of the public meeting. TAC members should reserve the Thursday before the public meetings, February 17, in the event an additional meeting is needed to facilitate planning.
- 8) Next Steps. The next steps include the following:
 - a) Convening the Remediation Work Group.
 - b) Implementing plans for the February public meeting.
 - c) The next meeting of the TAC will be held on January 27, 2011, at 2:00 p.m. at the DTSC headquarters.
 - d) The DTSC headquarters (627 Wake Ave., El Centro, 92243) will become the regular meeting place for the TAC.
 - e) The TAC meeting schedule will be sent to all members as an Outlook appointment.
- 9) **Adjournment.** The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:40 p.m.